

Hell in the Scriptures

By David J. Stewart

“In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction...” —2nd Thessalonians 1:8,9

So many people today don't believe in a literal place called Hell that burns with fire and brimstone (Revelation 21:8), where all who die in their sins without Jesus Christ go to be punished for all eternity. Sadly, there are countless people who twist the Scriptures in an attempt to teach that Hell is not what the Bible says it is... a place of flaming torment.

The Bible contains an overwhelming amount of irrefutable evidence teaching that Hell is indeed a literal place of torment, where those who die in their sins without Jesus Christ are punished in flaming fire and vengeance by God (2nd Thessalonians 1:8,9).



Here are many Scriptures to consider...

Numbers 26:10...

“And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up together with Korah, when that company died, what time the fire devoured two hundred and fifty men: and they became a sign.”

Korah and the men who rebelled with him against Moses were swallowed into Hell beneath.

Psalms 9:17...

“The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.”

Carefully notice that "hell" here cannot merely mean "the grave" as some foolishly teach. For if "hell" only means the grave, then where do the righteous go? The Bible plainly teaches that the righteous and the wicked do NOT go to the same place. The wicked are turned into Hell; but the righteous unto life eternal.

Psalms 139:8...

“If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.”

The contrast here is between Heaven and Hell; not between Heaven and the grave. Also notice the interesting phrase... "If I make my bed in hell." Everyone who goes to Hell

chooses to go there by rejecting Jesus as their Christ. It is sinful men who make their own bed in Hell. No sinner must go to Hell. The gift of eternal life is freely offered to all mankind through faith in Christ Jesus (John 14:6; Acts 10:43; Revelation 22:17).

Isaiah 5:14...

“Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure: and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it.”

It wouldn't make any sense if "hell" merely meant the grave. What point would there be in condemning the wicked to hell if that's the same place where the righteous go? Clearly, Hell is a place only for the wicked who die in their sins. The righteous go to heaven to be with the Lord (2nd Corinthians 5:8).

Ezekiel 31:16...

“I made the nations to shake at the sound of his fall, when I cast him down to hell with them that descend into the pit...”

Clearly, this Scripture defines "hell" as being more than the grave. The Bible speaks about "descending into the pit." The Bible also speaks of being "cast into Hell," which clearly implies judgment from a holy God. If "hell" merely meant grave as Mormons, Jehovah's Witness and other false prophets teach, then God would have said that the righteous shall be cast into hell too; but the Bible NEVER says that anywhere!!! Only the wicked shall be cast into Hell, a bottomless pit, where Satan is called "the angel of the bottomless pit" (Revelation 9:11).

Matthew 5:28,29...

“But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.”

The Bible plainly teaches that all sinners are condemned to Hell. If "hell" simply means grave, then what harm or worry is there in fornicating, getting drunk, raping, murdering, partying with illegal drugs and committing all sorts of other sins? There would be none. If there is NO place of punishment in eternity, then there is NO justice for all the victims of crimes committed in this earthly life. So then what advantage is there to being righteous? If one believes that the Bible is God's Word, then you absolutely must believe that Hell is a literal place of torment and anguish, that burns with searing flames of fire and brimstone, where sinners are punished for their sins against a holy God.

Matthew 16:18...

“And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

This is a very interesting Scripture. The word "gates" denotes the entrance (also the exit) of Hell. I heard one preacher say that the gates of Hell cannot prevent the Gospel from snatching souls from the depths of Hell. Of course, one who dies in their sins without the Lord is hopelessly lost for ever and ever. There are no second chances once a soul leaves this earthly life. There is NO such place as Purgatory and no amount of prayer or contributions to one's church can lessen God's flaming vengeance upon those who die in their sins without Jesus Christ.

This Scripture plainly teaches that the Church's arch enemy is Satan and the forces of Hell. We also see this evidenced by Ephesians 6:12. Our battle is not against flesh and blood (humanity); but against principalities, powers and spiritual wickedness in high places (the gates of Hell).

Matthew 23:15...

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves."

The Bible speaks of being "a child of Hell." Matthew 5:9 speaks of the "children of God." Galatians 3:26 wonderfully states, *"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."* Amen! Jesus called the scribes and Pharisees the children of Hell. The Pope is a child of Hell. Every Catholic priest is a child of Hell. Every Lutheran minister is a child of Hell. Every Mormon, Jehovah's Witness, Catholic, Seventh-Day Adventist, Scientologist, Christian Scientist, Moonie, Buddhist, Hindu, Zoroastrian, Wiccan, Muslim, Judaist, Lordship Salvationist, and New Ager is a child of Hell.

Matthew 23:33,34...

"Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city."

Jesus warned about the "damnation of Hell," and He spoke about "escaping" the damnation of Hell. If hell is merely the grave, or not so bad a place as fools today teach, then why would we need to escape it's damnation? If the wicked go to the same eternal place as the righteous, then why do we need to escape it? What is the damnation for the Pharisees and scribes if their fate is no different than the fate of the righteous? Common sense tells the honest student of the Bible that Hell must be a literal place of torment and fire, i.e., damnation.

Mark 9:45,46...

"And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

The Bible teaches that love for personal sins is the primary reason why sinners won't come to Jesus to be saved (John 3:20). We read from the Scriptures that hell's fire will never be quenched. The "worm that dieth not" may refer to one's conscience which will eat away at them for eternity. The worst part about Hell won't be the flames of torment, it will be knowing in your heart that Jesus fully paid for your way to Heaven, and you could have gone to Heaven; but you loved your sins more and refused to come to the Savior to be saved.

To clarify, a person does NOT have to forsake committing sins to be saved; but ironically it's one's love for sin that prevents them from coming to Jesus... "lest his deeds should be reprov'd" (John 3:20). Jesus said in John 5:40, "And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." To be saved, a person MUST acknowledge that they are GUILTY before God of violating His holy Word (Romans 3:19). Most people are not willing to repent; but instead choose to continue denying and making excuses for their sins. God only requires us to admit our guilt before Him and to seek forgiveness through His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ.

Luke 10:15...

"And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell."

Jesus prophesied imminent judgment and doom upon the wicked inhabitants of Capernaum. It is important to notice that the Bible continually speaks of being "cast down to hell" and "thrust down to hell," which clearly indicate God's angry hand of judgment. Psalm 7:11 proclaims that "God is angry with the wicked EVERY DAY." There is not a single-day that passes when God is not angry at Oprah Winfrey. She has publicly denied that Jesus is the only Way to Heaven. In lieu of the fact that the world is filled with billions of wicked Christ-rejecters, God must be One angry God. John 3:36 tells us that the "wrath of God" abideth upon all Christ-rejecters. On April 2nd, 2005, Billy Graham told Larry King on the *Larry King Live Show* that he believes Pope John Paul II is in Heaven. What is wrong with Billy Graham? The Bible teaches that God's wrath abideth on the wicked.

Again we see that "hell" is more than just a symbolic term. Although one's life may seem like hell on earth, it cannot be compared to burning in the torments of fire and brimstone for all eternity.

Luke 12:5...

"But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him."

This Scripture clearly evidences the "Second Death" mentioned in Revelation 21:8. Men may kill us once; but God can kill us forever in Hell. This Scripture would make no sense at all if "hell" merely refers to the grave or a place of non-suffering. What fear would there be?

Luke 16:23...

“And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments...”

In view of all the Scriptures I've just shared with you concerning the reality of Hell, who could honestly say that Luke 16:19-31 is merely a parable? Jesus DIDN'T say it was a parable. Jesus never used specific names in His parable; but he speaks of Lazarus and Abraham in this passage of Scripture. It is clearly NOT a parable.

Furthermore, even if it was a parable, then what was Jesus trying to describe? It would be misleading for Jesus to speak of Hell as a literal place of "torment" and "flames" if it weren't so. Consider Jesus' Words in John 14:2... *"In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you..."* Jesus was a Man of His Word—He said what He meant and meant what He said. Hell is a place of torment and fire.

James 3:6...

“And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.”

Again we find a Biblical reference to "fire of Hell."

2nd Peter 2:4...

“For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment...”

If "hell" is merely the grave, then how could God cast the fallen angels into hell (Greek: *Tartarus*)? Angels do not die in the human sense. You don't bury them six-feet under. We clearly read that these fallen angels (i.e. demons) are reserved in chains of darkness awaiting judgment.

There are three different Greek words for our English word "hell" today: Hades, Gehenna and Tartarus. Gehenna is the *Lake of Fire* (Revelation 20:11-15). Tartarus is a special jail for demons reserved unto judgment. Hades is where lost sinners go now when they die (a tormentuous place of fire, torment and suffering). For a comprehensive examination on the subject of Hell, please read: [A Biblical Examination of Hell](#).

Revelation 1:18...

“I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.”

Here we see that death and Hell are two separate things. I always capitalize Heaven and Hell because they are literal places and these are their proper names. If "hell" merely meant grave, then there would be no distinction between death and hell.

Revelation 20:13-15...

“And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”

How can you argue with the Biblical term "second death"? Obviously there is a punishment that goes beyond the grave. The Bible teaches that lost sinners will stand trial and be sentenced to the *Lake of Fire* based upon their WORKS. Also, the Bible teaches that death and Hell (Hades) were cast into the Lake of Fire (Gehenna). This plainly shows that hell means much more than the grave. The Hebrew word "Sheol" is the Old Testament equivalent to "Hades" in the New Testament for "hell." Sheol doesn't strictly mean the grave. It can mean a whole lot more, and often does. Psalm 9:17 is a perfect example: "The wicked shall be turned into Hell." Obviously this means much more than merely *the grave*, because that's also where the righteous go. It would make no sense. The clear interpretation is that the wicked and all those who forget God will be punished in eternity.

Conclusion

The Bible contains an overwhelming amount of evidence showing that Hell is a literal place that burns with fire. Those people today who scoff and deny the existence of a literal Hell that burns with fire are calling God a liar. Either you believe the Bible is God's Word or you don't. There is NO middle ground.

"Beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit" (Jude 1:17-19).

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